



## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

### INFORMATION SERVICE

UNITED STATES FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

For Release MARCH 3, 1957

#### FWS REVIEWS HUNTING AND FISHING RESOURCES ON SMALL WATERSHED PROJECTS

Reconnaissance surveys by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service and State Fish and Game Departments on 130 small watershed flood control projects have revealed that on only six of them are fish and wildlife resources threatened by the proposed development, the Department of the Interior announced today.

Detailed studies are now being made on five of these projects to determine how plans can be modified to provide flood control without serious injury to fish and game. Study on the sixth project will probably get under way in the near future.

Federal assistance to local groups in the small watershed program is under the direction of the Soil Conservation Service of the Department of Agriculture with the cooperation of appropriate State and other Federal agencies. A "small watershed" is one not more than 250,000 acres in extent. No single water impoundment can include more than 25,000 acre-feet of total capacity nor more than 5,000 acre-feet of floodwater detention capacity. Project costs are paid from local and Federal sources, but in no instance, except by special Congressional approval, can the Federal portion of the expense be more than \$250,000. Funds are provided by Congress for each approved project.

The Service works cooperatively with State Fish and Game Departments to determine the probable effects project developments will have upon existing fish and game resources and prepares recommendations for their protection. The Fish and Wildlife Service responsibility is under the terms of a joint memorandum of agreement with the Soil Conservation Service.

The cost of mitigation, or replacement of any loss of fish and wildlife values, is made part of the project costs. The Federal Government will not pay for "enhancement", or development of the fish and game resources beyond the pre-project status. Such enhancement can be financed by local sources, however.

On the Sudbury-Assabet-Concord Watershed of 243,000 acres in Middlesex and Worcester Counties, Massachusetts, the Service reconnaissance study showed that proposed land drainage, dredging and channel clearing would adversely affect fur animals and pheasants and would lower the water level in large marsh areas of major importance as waterfowl habitat. Important sport fishery resources also would be adversely affected. The detailed report now in process will contain loss-mitigating measures which the Service will recommend to the project sponsors.

Detailed recommendations cannot be made yet on the Central Sonoma Watershed in Sonoma County, California, because the basic plans are not far enough advanced, but in an interim report the Fish and Wildlife Service has pointed out areas where loss-prevention measures can be applied.

A report now in process on the Conewango Creek Watershed plan in Cattaraugus and Chautauqua Counties, New York, will suggest how valuable wetlands can be saved and how stream fishing can be protected. This watershed contains 190,000 acres.

A request for funds to defray the cost of detailed studies on the 68,000-acre Toogoodoo Creek Watershed in Charleston County, South Carolina, has just been approved by the Soil Conservation Service and studies will commence shortly. The Fish and Wildlife Service also has requested funds to make a more complete survey of the Johnson Bayou Watershed project in Pointe Coupee Parish in Louisiana where deer, squirrels and quail will be injured unless preventive or substitute measures are carried out.

Funds to make the detailed studies are supplied by the Soil Conservation Service upon proper showing by the Fish and Wildlife Service that the study is needed. To date such studies have costs amounts varying from \$830 to \$5,500.

x x x